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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

memorandum

DATE: February 12, 1981

REPLY TO ATTN OF: AmEmbassy SAN SALVADOR, EL SALVADOR
CONS: Patricia A. Lasbury

SUBJECT: John J. Sullivan

EXCISE

TO: Department of State CA/OCS/EMR

Attn: Russ Winge

Attached find copy of record of events in Sullivan case as kept by Sheraton [redacted] Also included is copy of report from National Police sent by Sub-director Coronel D. Monterrosa in name of Coronel Lopez Nuila.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY [signature] DATE MAR 1 5 1984
RDS☐or XDS☐EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
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PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS (b)(6)

Enclosures

CONS:PALasbury:al

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UNIDAD, GARANTIA Y SEGURIDAD"

DIRECCION GENERAL

*

DEPEN. Sub-Dirección General.
DEPTO. Secretaría.
SEC. Correspondencia.
COM. Of. Nº
R. DM E. Jahc.
IMP. NAC.

San Salvador, 12 de Febrero de 1981.

ASUNTO:

Señorita
PATRICIA LASBURY,
Cónsul de los Estados Unidos de América
en El Salvador,
25a. Av. Nte. y 25a. Calle Pte.,
CIUDAD.-

De acuerdo a las gestiones hechas por ese Honorable Consulado a esta Institución, referidas a que se investigue el paradero del ciudadano norteamericano Sr. JOHN J. SULLIVAN, ya que dicho señor había llegado a este país vía aérea el día 28DIC980, habiéndose registrado en el Hotel El Salvador Sheraton y posteriormente salió sin haber regresado de nuevo a dicho Hotel, para lo cual se han llevado a cabo las diligencias siguientes:

1º) Se envió Comisión de Detectives al Hotel Sheraton a recabar datos,

2º) Se distribuyó fotografía del señor Sullivan, a todas las Secciones de Policía del país y otros Cuerpos de Seguridad, a fin de localizarlo,

3º) Se revistó todos los Hoteles de la Capital,

4º) Se ordenó a todas las Unidades de Policía informen características de personas encontradas muertas (cadáveres no identificados) encontrados en su jurisdicción,

5º) Se solicitó a la Dirección General de Migración, informe del movimiento migratorio del desaparecido,

6º) Se han visitado Hospitales y Centros de Salud, sin ningún resultado positivo sobre el caso, y

7º) El señor Jefe del Centro de Análisis de Información de esta Institución, envió a todos los señores Directores de Policía Nacional de la República, fotocopia de toda la información con que se cuenta sobre el desaparecido periodista Sr. JOHN J. SULLIVAN, con el objeto de lograr su localización.

DIOS, UNION Y LIBERTAD.

Ttc. Coronel de Art. DEM. DOMINGO MONTERROSA,
Sub-Director General de la Policía Nacional

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[illegible], January 12, 1981

Received a telephone call from José Gonzalez, President of Sheraton for Latin America, in Miami, Florida, who asked me what I could tell him about Hotel guest John Sullivan, who, as per US newspapers had disappeared from the hotel. Giving him the facts as I knew them from hearsay, he asked me to wait a second as he was trying to get Mr. Tom Alt, Security Corporate from Boston Headquarters on another phone, so that this gentleman could listen in. I told him the following:-

" John Sullivan checked in on December 28, 1980 late afternoon; was shown to his
" room, apparently took a shower and changed and around 7 pm. walked out of the
" hotel, dressed in a brown suit. This info was given by the Receptionist who
" checked him in and saw him going out. The following day, Housekeeping reported
" the room as occupied, bedcover rumpled and on the 30th. as NOT SLEPT IN.
" On Sunday night, January 4, around 9 pm. the Resident Manager contacted Colonel
" Busch, Military Attaché, who was having dinner in the hotel and asked for his
" advice as to what he should do with Mr. Sullivan, briefing him on what we had
" on this person, whom he considered as a "skipper". Colonel Busch, after taking
" all personal data from Sullivan's registration card, apparently got in touch
" with Mr.Lane, Director of USICA at the US Embassy, and we were informed that this
" person had not reported to the U.S. Embassy, as is the usual and regular procedure
" apparently.Later, around 11 pm. Mr. Peter Dumas, General Manager of the hotel,
" who had been called by Colonel Busch, together with Antonio Gómez, Resident
" Manager of the Hotel went to Mr. Sullivan's room (No.526), where they found
" every evidence that the personal effects belonged to Mr. Sullivan. They packed
" all this is a blue tote bag, which is still kept in Management's office. By
" the same token his hotel bill was closed that day, and amounts to US$ 226.30.
" The U.S. Consul, Mrs. Patricia Lasbury, who had contacted me on Wednesday,
" January 7, had come down to see me and was given the opportunity in Management's
[illegible] and going through the personal effects of Mr.Sullivan.

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" January 7, had come down to see me and was given the opportunity in Management's
" office of having a look and going through the personal effects of Mr.Sullivan.
" I made it clear that I had to protect the hotel and Sheraton, and could not
" give her these belongings until I received some sort of P.A. and the hotel
" bill was paid. She told me that she would convey all this to the State
" Department and apparently to the relatives of this "skipper", and could
" see my point of view, taking into account the unfortunate happenings of
" the last days in which the hotel was deeply involved.
" She asked me whether the Salvadorean Police had given orders not to

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" Sullivan's personal belongings, to which I replied that to my knowledge
" the Police had not been informed by the hotel; that we had contacted the
" U.S. authorities as Mr. Sullivan is a U.S. citizen. The same was asked by
" Mr. Alt through Mr. Gonzalez, to which I replied that for us this man
" was a "skipper". I understood that the information given was going to be
" reported to the State Department, which body apparently had voiced
""that the hotel had been uncooperative". I could only reply that the U.S.
" Consul had received and would keep on receiving our fullest cooperation,
" but that we had to protect the hotel and the name of Sheraton".

So far the telephone conversation.-

Monday, January 12, 1981 - AM

Mrs. Patricia Lawsbury, U.S. Consul called me and over the phone asked me whether I would send her a photostat of Sullivan's registration card, to enable the family to compare his signature. I promised to do so, and she would come by to pick up the copy. By the same token she asked me if she could make an inventory of Sullivan's personal effects. I told her that I had done so already, that she was welcome to come to the office and compare the list with the personal belongings and check that everything was in order.

Tuesday, January 13, 1981 - AM

As agreed with the U.S. Consul, Mrs. Lawsbury came over around 11 am. and checked the list with the personal belongings of Mr. Sullivan. As everything was found in order, I gave her a copy in duplicate, duly signed of this list, keeping a third copy for our files, which she signed. At the same time, she received a photostatic copy of Sullivan's registration card and hotel bill.

I took the liberty to tell her that apparently the State Department had complained of our not being "cooperative" to Mr. Alt of Hdq. Boston, who in turn had passed this information to us via our Senior Vice President stationed in Miami. She in turn told me that the family had complained to the State Department that the U.S. Consul in SAL had not been co-operative at all.

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Wednesday, January 14, 1981 - AM

Mrs. Lawsbury called, informing me that she had gone through Mr. Sullivan's

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Hotel bill and that there was a charge for a telephone call on January 4, 1981. Could I please try and trace the call and inform her of my findings. I promised to do so. This call was made by Colonel Busch from the room to probably Mr. Lane. All Mr. Gomez could tell me was that the part of the conversation he heard was: "Colonel Busch: "I am sorry to bother you this late.....". I will convey this to Mrs. Lansbury who can obtain the colonel's corroboration.

January 14, 1981 - 10.45 am.-

Received a telephone call from Mr. Alt, Boston, with a view to obtain any additional information. Going over everything once more, he stopped me short insisting that what had happened, happened on the 2nd. of January and not on the 4th. I immediately told him that in order not to lose time, I would put him through to the Resident Manager, Mr. Antonio Gomez, who had been personally involved from the start in this case, and could be certain on the dates.This was done.

Have tried to contact Mrs. Lansbury, without any success, she being in a meeting; left word to contact me at her convenience.

To keep in mind asking her for a letter in which the U,S. Consul clearly states that we have been cooperative, so that I can send it to Gonzalez with copy to Tom Alt, Boston.

January 14, 1981 - 3.45 PM -

Received a telephone call from Mr. Ulrich Eckhardt from MIA, giving their views on Sullivan case. To deliver Sullivan's personal belongings against a P.A. which the U.S. Consulate is entitled to deliver, or a letter from the next of kin, duly authenticated. Not to insist on payment of his hotel bill, as they consider that we are not completely freed of fault. I asked him to please explain, which he did emphasizing that although a franchise property we have to adhere to policies and procedures of Sheraton. I explained that we are not operating under normal conditions, that the situation in the country is far from normal; that guests go away for 2 to 3 days without notifying us, and then come back - I referred of course to reporters

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inform Housekeeping and Front Desk of the standard procedure to be followed in case a guest had not slept in without previous notice on his part to the hotel. This was done immediately afterwards.

The Resident Manager pointed out that the U,S. ~~citizens~~ Embassy people at present at the hotel have for some time now not slept in, without previously informing us, as for security reasons they cannot give us the address where they will pass the night. Now with the martial law in force, none of these people, not even Colonel Busch sleeps in. (martial law from 7pm. to 5 am.).

January 17, 1981

Toñito Gomez informed that american military delegations are returning to the Hotel, they checked in as of Friday 16th. sent by Rafael Flores Lima. Colonel Busch now also staying permanently. Special security staff from salvadorean Estado Mayor. To comply with their requests; personnel to have personal identification plaques. They taking care of VIP tower completely: 2 guards at entrance, 2 at 3rd. floor front of elevators and 2 at door leading to Swimming Pool area.

This however, has nothing to do with case Sullivan. But just to keep in mind that this hotel must offer some kind of security to the Americans more so the military people, as otherwise they would not have come back from Hotel Presidente. the phrase from Boston "not altogether freed from fault" is a little bit hard to digest.

January 20, 6 pm.

Received a telephone call from New Jersey from one of the relatives of Sullivan. Identified myself but wanted to talk to G.M. Passed call on to Toñito Gomez, who identified himself as Resident Manager. Apparently they want to put the hotel responsible for Sullivan's disappearance. Talked about some friend of Sullivan, called Charles - who told these people that he had gone to the Bar, which nobody can confirm or not, as our staff has not even seen him. Only the employee who checked him in. Toñito explained that we have our Security Department in the hotel but that we do not have

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The U.S. Consul has not been in touch with us since January 13, when she came to get the inventory of Sullivan's personal belongings, photostat of his bill and registration card.

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Monday, February 2, 1981 -

A telephone call was received during the afternoon from a Dieter Zola Tel. 202-789 1188, enquiring whether certain information could be obtained from the room maid in the sense that he wanted to know whether the occupant had slept between the sheets on December 28, 1980, or had rested on top of the bed. Mr. Antonio Gomez the Resident Manager promised to find out and call collect at party's given number the following day. Mr. Gomez did so and placed the call during the afternoon of the 3rd., conveying to this gentleman that the bed had definitely not been slept in; the housemaid on duty recalled that apparently the occupant had only rested on top of the bed.

February 5,1981 (Thursday) I received a telephone call from Ms. Pat Lasbury enquiring whether Mr. Peter Dumas could receive her on Monday aternoon at 3.30 pm February 9, re Sullivan's case. That apparently our report differed in small details from the U.S. Embassy's, which, she felt, shoudl be straightened out to avoid unlimited requests for further information from Sullivan's family - which neither of us here could give.

During the afternoon of that date - Thursday 5th. - Mr. Antonio Gomez showed me a pathetic letter written apparently by Sullivan's sister, in which she asks for any additional information he might be in a position to give her, adding that if his letter went unsigned she would understand as, she surmizes, probably from fear, we have refrained from giving full information of all the facts. This letter will be shown to Mr. Peter Dumas, who will have to decide whether or not and in which terms, Mr. Gomez, will reply to this lady.

February 9, 1981 - Monday -

AM - Received telephone call from U.S. Embassy on behalf of Ms. Pat Lasbury enquiring whether Mr. Dumas was in town. My reply negative but that probably he will be arriving from Honduras next Saturday.

PM - U.S. Embassy enquiring whether I can receive Ms. Lasbury to-morrow Tuesday, February 10th. at 3.30 pm. Answered to be glad to receive her.

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[redacted] BC [redacted] BC

San Salvador, El Salvador C.A.

EXCISE 2/15/82 0153 E

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

I have been informed about one month ago, but did not take too much stock in it, but again this week another person informed me that your son is alive and in the bottom cells of the Policia de Hacienda.

He is not eating very well, but seemed in fair health and his beard has grown down to his chest.

From what I gather, he was captured with the guerillas and taken prisoner.

It might be that the guerillas were the ones that came for his at the hotel as he possibly had made contact with them and possibly offered to run a story on them and wanted to be with them.

If what I was told is correct, the Policia de Hacienda have had plenty of chance to kill him, But as he is supposedly still alive, they have not the intention of killing him.especially after the killing of the four nuns raised such a fuss.

I was t-ld that possibly after our election March 28, 1982 he could be left Free but I do not see what the elections would have to do with his release.

Unless under the new government it could be proven that he was not a sympathizer with the leftist Marxist which the guerilla are.

I believe the only person which might have some influence in having him released and probably only after it could be proven that he was not a sympathizer and has not an adverse record in the FBI files would be the American Ambassador, Mr. Dean R. Hinton.

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A point to take into account is if the military did not have some adverse information and he was only going to write a story, why haven't they left him free? So this point has to be cleared up before much can be done.if it is true that he is still being held captive.

Cordially,

[redacted]

B6

cc: [redacted]

XXXXXXXX (friend of John's [redacted]

[redacted]

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[redacted]

B6

Address: [redacted]

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